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extent in other parts of New England, the people were ruled for over half a century by a peculiarly narrow and intolerant oligarchy. Nor was Puritanism the principal factor in the growth of the colonies that held it as a State religion. During the period of "the great migration" (1630-1640), it is estimated that the emigrants bound for Puritan colonies were outnumbered three to one by those who went to other settlements, and, further, that "not more than one in five of the adult males who went even to Massachusetts was sufficiently in sympathy with the religious ideas there prevalent to become a church member, though disfranchised for not doing so." When it is added that, despite all that has been written about town meetings, there is little evidence, according to Mr. Adams, to show that the New Englanders were more interested in government than were the people of other colonies, it will be seen that the value of the Puritan influence as such may be easily exaggerated.

So far as liberty is concerned this influence was hostile; for the real struggle for liberty that went on during the period covered by Mr. Adams's volume was not the inevitable controversy between the colonies and the mother country, but rather the resistance of the colonists to the Puritan domination. Thus it was not a misfortune but a blessing that Massachusetts became a royal colony. "What the English government granted was a charter by which the colony took her natural place, indeed, in an empire without whose protection she was defenseless, but which, at the same time, gave to her citizens a degree of self-government and political freedom which the theocratic group would never have been willing to concede." And the striking conclusion of it all is that the elements most typically American in colonial institutions were, in the case of Massachusetts, "forced upon her leaders, fighting to the last ditch against them, by an English king who could hardly speak the language of his subjects."

Thus, Mr. Adams's book, besides being entertaining on every page, does actually give one some insight into the way in which historic events come about and of the complex of causes that underlies the reasons men offer in explanation of their acts. The treatise is admirable for its clearness and comprehensiveness. The mind of an unbiassed, scientific historian is like a lens which receives rays of light coming from many different directions: the difficulty is to focus all the different lines of thought. Commonly we are aware of an increased illumination, a gathering in of the light toward a point; but all too often the picture appears to be a little blurred. The generalities are so very general that they are also vague. Mr. Adams, however, brings his ideas to an unusually sharp focus.

HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE: *Some Memories of Him and His Art*, collected by Max Beerbohm. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

Just what a skilled biographer would make of such materials as are collected in the volume that Max Beerbohm has made in memory of his brother,

it is not easy to say. Probably something much more definite and satisfactory than what we now have. The book is in fact a miscellany, part panegyric, part formal testimonial, part criticism. Lady Tree, sparing not herself, has written recollections more poignant and familiar than the cold pages of biography often accept, and at the same time she has portrayed her husband, unconsciously no doubt, as such a genius as could scarcely exist. Bernard Shaw writes, as is his wont, sincere criticism, with only moderate recognition of the principle of *nil nisi bonum*. W. L. Courtney in an open letter to an American friend rather apologetically defends Sir Herbert Tree's art. Throughout the whole work there is little coherence in the matter of dates, the progress of Tree's career, the development of his art and character. In various parts of the book hero-worship alternates with respectful reserve, enthusiasm with critical candor. The reader must strike his own balance.

Yet, despite its defects in respect of a good biography, the book is quite worth while, because, through it, one is able to see that the man's life itself was immensely worth while.

Logically, of course, one must, as usual, agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw. Logically it is the business of the actor to interpret the lines supplied by the playwright, just as it is the business of the musical performer to play the notes set down for him by the composer. And so Mr. Shaw seems quite justified in complaining bitterly of Tree's arrant sophistications (creative though some of them were) of the parts that he undertook. It is true that in some cases Sir Herbert himself put into the part all the life there was in it. It can scarcely be denied, however, that he was in such matters, like Habakkuk, *capable de tout*. No one whole-heartedly defends, for example, the four subsidiary Malvolios in Tree's *Twelfth Night*. But, as usual, one is constrained to dissent from Mr. Shaw's conclusion, which is that Tree should have been a playwright rather than an actor. One has an idea that Tree would have been a very bad playwright and that Shaw knows it.

It is a commonplace that great men can never be confined to formulas. Sir Herbert Tree was great—great in his enthusiasm, great in his instinct, great in his power to initiate and to give. Theatrical art should not be a plaything for second-rate virtuosos; neither is it one of the Platonic *ideas*, belonging to the pattern world of perfection. Genius must make of it what it can, and the public must take from it, not just what, ideally, it should give and nothing else, but whatever men of genius can make it effectively express.

The imperfections and inequalities in Tree's art seem not hard to define. "He could make himself look like Falstaff," writes Desmond MacCarthy; "he understood and revelled in the character of Falstaff, but his performance lacked fundamental force. Hence the contradiction in his acting: his performance as a whole often fell short of high excellence, yet these same impersonations were lit by insight and masterly strokes of interpretation, which made the spectator feel that he was watching the performance of the most imaginative of living actors." He was immensely versatile, but was at his

best only in parts of a certain limited type. "He loved to impersonate, and excelled in impersonating characters who, in varying degrees, were the play-actors of their own emotions." "He was," says W. L. Courtney, "a glorified amateur who dared things which a professional never would have dared, and won a shining victory."

All of which seems a mild and critical way of acknowledging that the man was a genius.

Insight, instinct, courage, naiveté—these were characteristic of his private as well as of his public personality. "Herbert had no learning," writes Max Beerbohm, "yet his instinct was so sure that he *knew things*. He was like an inspired Water-finder. . . . He was also an acute judge of human character." He had to do without teaching—would he have been the better for it? "Like Irving," writes Bernard Shaw, "he had to make a style and technique out of his own personality."

To have such instincts and such a heart as Tree had, and to possess the courage and simplicity to obey both, is greatness—though it is greatness into which some weakness inevitably enters. One lays down this book feeling that the world will be fortunate if a man like Tree is born once in a hundred years.